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SECURITY INFORMATION

75314-a

APR 21 1952

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

19 April 1952

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

DIR

Colonel Gerald F. Lillard, G-2  
Captain Ray Malpass, ONI  
Colonel Edward H. Porter, AFOIN  
Colonel S. M. Lansing, JIG

SUBJECT : SE-25: Communist Short-range Military Intentions  
in Korea

1. The attached draft estimate has been tentatively approved by the Board of National Estimates, and is forwarded for your review. It is requested that your representatives meet with the Board in Room 146, South Building, on Tuesday, 22 April, at 2:00 PM, with a view to completing the estimate for submission to the IAC on Thursday, 24 April.

2. Because of the "crash" priority of the estimate, this draft has been prepared on the basis of evidence reported to the Watch Committee on 16 April. It is requested that your representatives bring to the meeting any further evidence bearing on the problem. If any such evidence is of such a character as to alter the basic conclusions of the draft, it is requested that you notify [REDACTED] Ext. 3533, in advance of the meeting, at your earliest convenience.

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[REDACTED]  
Acting Executive Secretary

Distribution "B"

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75314-b

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

19 April 1952

SUBJECT: SE-25: COMMUNIST SHORT-RANGE MILITARY INTENTIONS IN KOREA

THE PROBLEM

To estimate short-range Communist military intentions in Korea.

CONCLUSIONS

1. There has been a general strengthening of Communist military capabilities in Korea since the beginning of armistice negotiations in mid-1951. In addition, there has been in recent weeks a sharp increase in enemy military activity.
2. There are no indications, however, that the Communists have yet taken many of the preparations which have heretofore preceded general offensives, some of which preparations we consider essential. On the basis of available indications alone, therefore, it appears unlikely that the Communists will undertake a large-scale ground offensive in the immediate future (within the next two weeks).

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3. Available indications of the over-all increase in Communist capabilities and the recent step-up in Communist military activity suggest the following possible short-range intentions: (a) to launch without warning a limited ground offensive and/or a large-scale air offensive; (b) to prepare for a future full-scale Communist ground offensive; (c) to carry out a normal relief of front-line units; (d) to strengthen defenses in anticipation of a UN attack; or (e) to exert pressure on the armistice discussions.

4. We are unable to estimate, on the basis of available military evidence, which of these possible short-range enemy intentions is the most probable. Should the Communists decide to launch a limited ground offensive and/or a large-scale air offensive against UN forces and installations, they have the capability to do so with little warning.

4a. Communist conduct of cease-fire discussions in recent weeks provide no positive indications of immediate Communist military intentions. There are no reliable indications that the Communists anticipate an early armistice. Their military activity appears to be inconsistent with the expectation of an early armistice agreement except insofar as it may be designed to influence the discussions.

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DISCUSSION

### I. COMMUNIST CAPABILITIES IN KOREA

5. During the armistice negotiations, the Communists have substantially increased their capabilities in Korea. They have replaced their losses, re-equipped their units, re-trained their troops, and re-organized and re-disposed their forces. They have built up their ground forces from \_\_\_\_\_ [G-2 fill in] to the present estimate of 875,000 personnel. Qualitative improvement has accompanied the quantitative build-up; they have made significant additions of armor and artillery and have substantially increased the fire power of all units.

6. The Communists have made excellent use of the long period of fairly static operations to improve their logistical position. Although decreased amounts of many types of supplies have been required during the past nine months, the Communists have made an apparently maximum effort to bring up supplies. As a result the supply position of the Communists in forward areas, despite continued air and naval attacks by UN forces, is far better than at any time since the Chinese Communist intervention in Korea.

7. The enemy ground forces presently in contact could launch a limited offensive with little warning but they do not have the capability for launching a major offensive without further preparations. It is estimated that the Communists have the logistic capability to maintain the momentum of a major offensive for from 5 to 10 days.

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8. The capabilities of the Communist Air Force in the Korean area have improved steadily and rapidly. During the armistice negotiations, Communist aircraft strength in the Korean area has increased from \_\_\_\_\_ aircraft to the present total of \_\_\_\_\_ aircraft including an increase from \_\_\_\_\_ jets to the current estimate of \_\_\_\_\_ jets. [DI/USAF fill in]. Airfield development in Manchuria has been undertaken on a large scale; a well-integrated system of air control and warning has been established, and Communist pilots have been engaged in an intensive training program which has included combat experience. The Communists have also demonstrated a significant capability to repair and replace aircraft.

9. An air offensive could be launched at any time. This offensive could include an initial commitment of over 500 Mig-15's as well as substantial numbers of piston-engined fighters and light bombers.

## II. INDICATIONS OF COMMUNIST MILITARY INTENTIONS IN KOREA

### A. Ground

10. For the first time in several months there are indications of large-scale redeployment of Communist forces in Korea.

a. The forward movement of two Communist armies, one towards the western sector and one towards the central sector, has been accepted. The movement of three other CCF armies toward the western sector has been reported and is considered probable.

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b. Reports of PW's and other information point to the possibility of a forward movement of armor from the Wonsan area on the east coast, suggesting that elements of the CCF 3rd Armored Division may have been moved southward. Several PW reports have also referred to an expected southward movement of the North Korean V Corps.

These reported movements suggest an increase in Communist troop, armor, and artillery strength within operational distance of the front.

11. During the past few weeks there has been a number of PW reports of a new offensive. Within the last two weeks, two Communist PW's referred to an enemy offensive to be launched "when it is warmer" or "if the peace talks fail." Another report of unknown reliability states the North Korean V Corps is expected to move southward to launch an attack during May.

12. Other PW's, however, have continued to refer to enemy defensive plans, including the strengthening of defense fortifications and the rotation of front-line units. The possibility that the enemy is preparing to relieve some front-line units is further suggested by PW reports that the CCF 67th Army will relieve the 68th Army and that the CCF 25th Army is to be relieved in the immediate future. There is no confirmation, however, that the relief of any front-line units is under way.

13. There has been one recent report that North Korean guerrilla forces are being trained to infiltrate UN lines (a tactic which has preceded

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previous offensives). This report receives some substantiation from the recent capture of UN forces of a small number of line-crossers.

B. Air

14. The most significant recent incident with respect to enemy air activity was a visual sighting on 13 April of 450 jet aircraft on Tatungkon airfield and 50 on Antung airfield. This is double the number of aircraft ever before sighted on these airfields and very nearly the total estimated Mig-15 strength in Manchuria. Although an error of up to 75 aircraft in this sighting is possible, this report is regarded as substantially accurate. Subsequent observations during the day disclosed that this total had been reduced to approximately 200 aircraft on both fields. Possible explanations for this concentration are that bad weather precluded the use of other Manchurian airfields or that this was a test of personnel and facilities under crowded conditions. It is also possible that this represented a "show of force" designed to influence the armistice discussions.

15. Other indications that the enemy may be preparing for increased activity, possibly including air operations over South Korea on a large scale, was (a) the reported observation on 1 April of a Mig-15 over the Seoul-Suwon area on what appeared to be a photo-reconnaissance flight and (b) recent increased willingness of enemy pilots to engage UN aircraft.

C. Evaluation of Indications

16. There has been a general strengthening of Communist military capabilities in Korea since the beginning of armistice negotiations in

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mid-1951. In addition, there has been in recent weeks a sharp increase in enemy military activity.

17. There are no indications, however, that the Communists have yet taken many of the preparations which have heretofore preceded general offensives, some of which preparations we consider essential. On the basis of available indications alone, therefore, it appears unlikely that the Communists will undertake a large-scale ground offensive in the immediate future (within the next two weeks).

18. Available indications of the over-all increase in Communist capabilities and the recent step-up in Communist military activity suggest the following possible short-range intentions: (a) to launch without warning a limited ground offensive and/or a large-scale air offensive; (b) to prepare for a future full-scale Communist ground offensive; (c) to carry out a normal relief of front-line units; (d) to strengthen defenses in anticipation of a UN attack; or (e) to exert pressure on the armistice discussions.

19. We are unable to estimate, on the basis of available military evidence, which of these possible short-range enemy intentions is the most probable. Should the Communists decide to launch a limited ground offensive and/or a large-scale air offensive against UN forces and installations, they have the capability to do so with little warning.



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III. STATUS OF ARMISTICE NEGOTIATIONS

20. Communist conduct of cease-fire discussions in recent weeks provide no positive indications of immediate Communist military intentions. There are no reliable indications that the Communists anticipate an early armistice. Their military activity appears to be inconsistent with the expectation of an early armistice agreement except insofar as it may be designed to influence the discussions.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

18 April 1952

SUBJECT: SE-25: COMMUNIST SHORT-RANGE INTENTIONS IN KOREA  
(Draft for the Board)

THE PROBLEM

To estimate short-range Communist intentions in Korea.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Military developments in Korea over the past several months indicate a general strengthening of Communist ground capabilities. However, the Communists probably do not have, with forces now available in Korea and Manchuria, the capability to defeat UN forces in Korea.

2. The enemy could launch a limited ground offensive and/or a large-scale air offensive against UN forces and installations with little or no additional warning. Although there has been a recent

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